

What is claimed is:

1. A system, comprising:

a local computer having a first processor and a first memory encoded with a first set of programming instructions executable by said first processor to:

execute a first instance of an application having at least one native data format;

and

accept a request to print a first print job associated with the application;

a remote printer; and

a remote computer, in communication with said local computer and said remote printer, having a second processor and a second memory encoded with a second set of programming instructions executable by said second processor to:

execute a second instance of the application;

receive the request; and

in response to said receiving, automatically print the first print job on the remote printer using said second instance;

wherein the first print job is communicated from the local computer to the remote computer in one or more of the at least one native data formats.

2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a relay computer, configured and adapted to:

receive the first print job from said local computer;

send the first print job to said remote computer.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein said remote computer:
periodically polls said relay computer to determine whether one or more print jobs
intended for said remote printer are waiting to be sent; and
if said one or more print jobs are waiting to be sent, retrieving said one or more print
jobs, and printing them on said remote printer.

4. A system, comprising:
at least one remote printer;
a network; and
a local computer, connectable to at least one local printer, and in communication with
said at least one remote printer via the network, comprising:
means for detecting whether one or more local printers are connected;
a processor; and
a memory encoded with programming instructions executable by said processor
to:
maintain an ordered list of at least two printers, including at least one of
said one or more local printers, and including at least one of said at least one
remote printer;
accept a request to print a document;
automatically traverse the ordered list to find a destination printer, the
first printer on the ordered list that is then accessible to said local computer;
and
print the document on the destination printer.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein a first one of said local printers is directly connected to the local computer.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein a first one of said local printers is connected to the local computer through a local-area network.

7. The system of claim 4,
further comprising a remote computer in communication with said local computer; and
wherein said remote printer is connectable to said local computer through said remote computer.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein said remote printer is directly connected to said remote computer.

9. The system of claim 4, wherein the ordered list comprises a printer identifier identifying information for one or more printers in the ordered list.

10. The system of claim 4, wherein the ordered list comprises a group identifier for one or more printers in the ordered list.

11. A method, comprising:
receiving a print job from a source computer;
accepting a polling signal from a destination computer;

responding to the polling signal by sending the print job to the destination computer for printing on a printer that is directly connected or LAN-connected to the destination computer; receiving a print job result signal from the destination computer; and sending the print job result signal to the source computer.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the print job comprises document data and printing parameters.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the print job comprises document data in a format not directly printable by the remote printer.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the format is a word processing application data format.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the format is a spreadsheet application data format.

16. A method, comprising:
receiving a print job from a source computer;
detecting an enabling signal; and
after said detecting, sending the print job to a remote printer that is neither directly connected nor LAN-connected to the source computer.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said receiving, detecting, and sending are performed by a relay server.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein:

the enabling signal is a polling signal from a destination computer; and

said sending comprises transmitting the print job to the destination computer for printing.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

receiving a print job result signal from the destination computer; and

sending the print job result signal to the source computer.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein the print job comprises printable data and envelope data.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the envelope data comprises document type information.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the envelope data comprises authentication information.

23. The method of claim 16, wherein the remote printer is selected from a plurality of remote printers before said receiving.

24. The method of claim 16, wherein the remote printer is selected from a plurality of remote printers after said receiving.

25. The method of claim 16, wherein:
the print job is originated by a user associated with a user identifier; and
the remote printer is selected from a plurality of remote printers based on the user identifier.

26. The method of claim 16, wherein:
the source computer has a network address; and
the remote printer is selected from a plurality of remote printers based on the network address.

27. The method of claim 16, further comprising:
exposing a user interface to a user at the source computer;
displaying a list of available remote printers through the user interface;
accepting a selection of an available remote printer by the user through the user interface;
and
transmitting the selection with the print job.